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SOME PARTICULARS
OF THE
LIFE OF SAMUEL ROGERS,

BY HIS NEPHEW, SAMUEL SHARPE.

THE following short notice is by no means offered to the reader as a complete Life of my uncle, Samuel Rogers, the poet. I neither feel equal to the task of writing such, nor called upon to undertake it. A near relation is not likely to possess, or wish to possess, the required impartiality ; but these few pages may be useful as a preface to his published works. In the life of an author we wish to be told, in the first place, the order in which he wrote his several works, that we may be enabled to study in them the growth of his mind and the progress of his thoughts. We wish also to be told the manner in which he wrote them, whether carefully, or hastily ; whether by the help of observation in the world, or of study in books. And we further wish to be told the particulars of his family, of his childhood, and of his education, and the other outward circumstances which helped to form his mind, and guide his tastes, and which were some of the causes that produced the writings that we

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admire. So far as my knowledge reaches, I have endeavoured to supply this information; but I have not ventured further. Mr. Rogers was not only a poet. His society was as much valued as his writings. He was for the last fifty years of his life the possessor of a choice collection of pictures and antiquities, an acknowledged judge in matters of art, the friend of all authors and artists, and the patron of many who needed his help. In these characters, and for his latter years, the materials for his Life are open to all in numerous published works; and they may perhaps he made use of in due time by some who can perform the task better than I can hope to do. For though I am now one of his nearest relations, and for many years enjoyed his full and intimate confidence as his partner in business, yet my opportunities of listening to his conversation have not been more frequent than those of many others. I never lived in the same house with him; my engagements in business and at home did not allow me to visit him so often as he kindly wished; and I was separated from him by a wide difference in our ages.

HIGHBURY PLACE, *July*, 1859.

IN the year 1763, Thomas Rogers the elder, the Poet's grandfather, was a wealthy glass manufacturer at Stourbridge in Worcestershire, and lived at a large house called the Hill, near that town. His wife Martha, a daughter of Richard Knight

of Downton, was dead. His family at the Hill consisted of himself and five unmarried daughters. Without giving up his business at Stourbridge he had entered into partnership with Daniel Radford, who was a large warehouseman in Cheapside; and his only son, Thomas Rogers the younger, had left Worcestershire to join this London partnership. This led to an intimacy with Daniel Radford's only child, Mary, whom Thomas Rogers the younger married in the year 1760. He thereupon became an inmate in Daniel Radford's family; and they lived together in Daniel Radford's house in Newington Green, Middlesex, till the death of the latter in 1767. The house stands on the Southgate road, on the west side of the green, and is the house nearest to London on that side. Here Samuel Rogers was born on the 30th of July, 1763.

The last hundred years have made fewer changes in Newington Green than in most other spots in the neighbourhood of London. Modern stucco has made the old red-brick house white, as indeed the Poet took the liberty of describing it. It still has a row of elms in front of it, and a large field on the side, though the road into which the gate opens from the field no longer deserves the name of the 'Green Lanes,' by which it was once known. In other respects it is much the same as when he claimed to—

‘Point out the Green Lane rough with fern and flowers;
‘The sheltered gate that opens to my field,
‘And the white front, thro’ mingling elms revealed.’

Daniel Radford, the Poet's grandfather on his mother's side, by careful attention to business, had been the maker of his own fortune. He was the son of Samuel Radford, a linendraper in Chester, and of Eleanor, a daughter of the Rev. Philip Henry, once incumbent of Worthenbury, in Flintshire, but afterwards one of that noble band of two thousand clergymen, who, on the passing of the Act of Uniformity in the beginning of Charles the Second's reign, left their churches and livings for conscience' sake, and became the founders of the sect of English Presbyterians. Daniel and his three sisters were early left as orphans, and they very much fell to the care of their uncle, the Rev. Matthew Henry, the eminent dissenting minister, and author of the Exposition of the Bible. Daniel Radford left Chester, and established himself in business in London, about the same time that his uncle, Matthew Henry, left the Presbyterian congregation at Chester to take charge of that at Hackney. Daniel Radford, about the year 1731, married Mary Harris of Newington Green, whose father, Samuel Harris, was an East India merchant, and had married a daughter of Dr. Coxe, physician to Queen Mary. This marriage probably led to Daniel Radford's settling at Newington Green, as his daughter Mary's marriage was afterwards the cause of Thomas Rogers the younger's settling there.

Thomas Rogers the younger, soon after his marriage with Mary Radford, formed a new partnership with two gentlemen of the name of Welch, as bankers,

first in Cornhill, and afterwards in Freeman's Court, Cornhill. Both the houses have since been pulled down to make way for Exchange Buildings.

Thomas Rogers the younger was, on his mother's side, cousin to Richard Payne Knight, the well-known writer on Art and collector of Greek antiquities, and to Andrew Knight, the writer on Horticulture; while his wife, Mary Radford, was cousin to William Coxe, the traveller and historian, and to Peter Coxe, a poet, and the auctioneer who had the honour of selling that portion of the Orleans Gallery of Pictures which its illustrious importers disposed of in London. These two literary and active-minded families may have had some share in moulding the character of the family in Newington Green. But we do not inherit our tastes and opinions from all our forefathers in an equal degree; and the opinions most firmly cherished in the house on Newington Green were those which came down to them from the teacher of religion, who had felt called upon to leave his pulpit and throw up his income for conscience' sake, and to change his home under the cruel enactments of the Five Mile Act, which forbade the expelled clergy to live within that distance of any corporate town, or of any town in which they had been ministers. These opinions were an earnest piety, a strict attention to religious observances, accompanied with a freedom of inquiry in matters of religion, and a rejection of all creeds and articles of faith as fetters upon the mind and snares to the conscience. The Rev. Philip Henry's

practice of keeping a religious journal to remind him of his shortcomings, and to encourage him in his good resolutions, was imitated by his daughter Eleanor Radford, by his grandson Daniel Radford, and by his great-granddaughter Mary Rogers; and when her sons were of a suitable age, Samuel or one of his brothers in turn read prayers to the family every morning and evening, from forms of prayer prepared by Dr. Richard Price. The Poet mentions his Dissenting parentage with just pride in the following lines:—

‘What though his ancestors, early or late,
‘Were not ennobled by the breath of kings;
‘Yet in his veins was running at his birth
‘The blood of those most eminent of old
‘For wisdom, virtue,—those who could renounce
‘The things of this world for their conscience-sake,
‘And die like blessed martyrs.’

The elder Mr. Rogers at the Hill in Worcestershire, had been a strong Tory when party feelings ran very high. He usually joined the neighbouring squires at the county dinners, when they drank to the success of the Church and State party, and to the confusion of the Whigs. In those days wine-drinking was often carried to excess, and it was sometimes one of the jokes of the evening to fling a powdered wig into the fire by way of making the Tory owner give proof of his dislike to Whig politics, and to send him away in a nightcap when his carriage came to fetch him home. But as Thomas Rogers the younger became after his marriage a Dissenter in religion, so he was

naturally a Whig in politics. His children were brought up to watch with interest the Dissenters' unsuccessful struggles in Parliament for the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, and to point to the new Mansion House in the City, as built by fines levied upon the Dissenters, who were chosen to the office of Sheriff, one after another, to the number of forty-five, and paid £400 a-piece, to escape taking the Church Sacrament on serving. Samuel was the third son; and when the American revolution began with riots in Boston, in 1774, he was eleven years old. He then received a lesson which he never forgot, when his father one night, after reading the Bible to his family, closed the book and explained to his children the cause of the rebellion, adding, that our nation was in the wrong, and that it was not right to wish the Americans should be conquered. He remembered also the Recorder of London, in the following year, putting on mourning for the battle of Lexington, and Granville Sharp giving up or refusing an office in the Tower, because he did not think it right to ship war-like stores against the Colonists.

He attended public worship with his father's family in the old Presbyterian Meeting House, on Newington Green, where Dr. Joseph Towers preached in the morning, and Dr. Richard Price in the afternoon, where his grandfather Radford, and his great-grandfather Harris, had attended before him. He sat in the south-east corner of the chapel, in the pew facing

and furthest from the minister on his left-hand side. The chapel is not without other literary claims to notice. In the next pew to him on the east side, sat a young lady, afterwards eminent in letters, Mary Wollstonecraft; Daniel Defoe had attended worship there a century earlier; and a few years after Mr. Rogers had left Newington Green, Mrs. Barbauld was a member of the congregation, while her husband occupied the pulpit.

Samuel's first school was at Hackney, under a Mr. Cockburn, and perhaps afterwards under a Mr. Pickburn, who kept a school a few years later in the same village. At the first Hackney school, in 1773, he became acquainted with William Maltby, a boy two years younger than himself, who was afterwards the friend of Porson, and then Porson's successor as Librarian to the London Institution. As boys, and afterwards as men, they were alike in their taste for poetry and love of letters; and they encouraged one another in their studies and aim after improvement. The friendship then begun continued unbroken for eighty years; it was founded on mutual respect, and on similarity of tastes; and when William Maltby died, in 1854, Samuel Rogers set up a tablet to his memory in Norwood Cemetery.

Samuel also studied for a short time under Mr. Burgh, the author of a work on education, self-improvement, and a wise aim in life, which he entitled a *Treatise on the Dignity of Human Nature*: the author also of two volumes of *Political Disquisitions*.

Mr. Burgh kept a school at the south-east corner of Newington Green; but when ill-health led him to give it up, he removed to Colebrook Row, Islington. There Samuel and his brothers went every day to read with him as their private tutor, and with very great advantage to themselves. Mr. Burgh was a man of an enlarged mind, of great reading, and good observation. His manner of teaching was thoroughly agreeable to his pupils; and for the excellence of the matter we may take the evidence of his printed works. He had a high aim in his views of education. He did not limit his pupils' studies to languages and mathematics. He did not set them to write essays or verses in Latin, nor perhaps give them a very exact knowledge of the dead languages. But he taught them to perceive the beauties of the great authors that they were studying, and to admire excellence as well in conduct as in writing. He had strong opinions in politics. He wrote in favour of the liberty of the press at a time when it was very much shackled by prosecutions, and in favour of a Reform in Parliament, when members were too often returned by close boroughs and by purchase; and he thought the American Colonies had not been treated with justice, when the nation was rushing into the American war. Such was the very able man who for a short time guided Samuel Rogers in his school studies. In the Treatise of the tutor, we find thoughts which we again meet with in the early writings of the pupil.

While living as a boy at Newington Green, Samuel and his brothers and sisters were taken from time to time to pay a visit to their grandfather and aunts at the Hill near Stourbridge. And these two houses, his grandfather's near Stourbridge, and his father's on Newington Green, most likely together supplied him with the scenery that his Poem on the 'Pleasures of Memory' opens with. The house at the Hill, from which the aunts removed soon after their father's death, may have been

'Yon old mansion frowning thro' the trees ;'

and have given him

'The garden's desert paths,'

and

'That hall where once, in antiquated state,

'The chair of justice held the grave debate.'

On the other hand,

'The village green'

may have been that in front of his father's house, where he was within the sound of Mr. Burgh's school-bell, which he describes as

'Quickening my truant feet across the lawn.'

The Hill is in the parish of Old Swinford ; and there in the churchyard are the tombstones of the Rogers family. There he had thoughtfully traced the name of Rogers

'On yon grey stone, that fronts the chancel-door,

'Worn smooth by busy feet now seen no more.'

This churchyard the Poet had in his mind when he said—

‘Here alone
‘I search the record of each mouldering stone.’

The visits to the Hill also sometimes led him to the Leasowes, lately the picturesque seat of the Poet Shenstone, who had been intimate with his father. At that time Shenstone’s artificial additions to the natural beauties of the place had not fallen to decay; and the visits to Worcestershire gave the following couplet to the ‘Pleasures of Memory,’—

‘Thus, thro’ the gloom of Shenstone’s fairy-grove
‘Maria’s urn still breathes the voice of love.’

In 1776 his excellent mother died. Through her the dissenting principles and strong feelings of religion had been brought into the family. In her last illness she called her children round her, and told them that it mattered little what happened to them when she was gone, provided they were good. She left eight, of whom one died in a few months; and the others, four sons and three daughters, all grew up to do honour to the good principles in which they were educated. On their mother’s death they fell to the care of her friend and cousin, Mary Mitchell, who had lived with her from childhood, and continued with her on her marriage, and who now took the management of Thomas Rogers’s house at Newington Green.

The eldest son, Daniel, was sent to Cambridge, and intended for a barrister; the second, Thomas,

was taken as a clerk into the banking-house; and Samuel, on leaving school, wished to be sent to the Dissenting College at Warrington, and to be a Dissenting Minister. He was led to this choice by his admiration of Dr. Price, who lived next door but one to his father, and preached at the Meeting House on the Green. But his father wished for him in his business, and took him as a clerk to Cornhill with his brother Thomas.

Samuel's health at this time was not good; he was troubled with weak eyes. Hence he was sent every summer to spend rather a long holiday at the seaside, sometimes at Margate, and sometimes at Brighton, for the benefit of sea-bathing. These visits gave him time for reading. Goldsmith's poems were among those upon which he formed his taste. Johnson's writings were always in his hands. Gray's poems received his warm admiration. He had not gained much classical knowledge at school. He had a moderate acquaintance with Latin and French, with little or none of Greek or Mathematics. But he had read most of the English authors; he had gained an early taste for Poetry, and for the beauties of style in Prose writing; and it was not long before he made his first attempts at authorship.

In 1780 his father was engaged in the political whirl of a contested election at Coventry, and afterwards in Parliament to retain his seat on a petition against his return. Samuel was then on his duties as a clerk in the banking-house; but he was at the

same time putting down some of his thoughts upon paper, and making up his mind to offer them to a publisher. In the beginning of 1781, when eighteen years old, in admiration of Johnson's Rambler, he sent a short literary essay to the Gentleman's Magazine. It was entitled The Scribbler, and printed with his initials S. R. at foot. It was followed in the same year by seven others. They had no great merit, but they mark the early date of his ambition to be an author. They mark also that he had already learned the highest use of writing—that it was to bring about a love of goodness. 'A man may devote his whole life,' says the Scribbler, 'to the attainment of knowledge, he may read all the books that have ever been written, study all the systems that have ever been formed; yet all his reading and all his study will amount to no more than this—that Virtue alone is productive of true felicity.' And he closes the series with these words: 'A man's happiness does not depend on his situation; it depends on himself; and he who has reduced his passions to obedience may fear no reverse of fortune; prosperity cannot intoxicate, adversity cannot depress him; he resembles the oak that continues firm and erect, whether the sun shines or the storm batters.' He looked forward every month to the day of these papers appearing, with boyish eagerness. As the Magazine reached him in the morning, it was brought into his bedroom before he was out of bed; and month by month, as he cut its wet pages and

found that the publisher had decided that his essay was deserving of publication, he was more and more fixed in his purpose to be an author.

His enthusiasm for literature and his respect for authors were such that he wished to call upon Dr. Johnson, who was then an old man, and at the height of his reputation. Accordingly he and his friend William Maltby entered Bolt Court, Fleet Street, for that purpose. One of them had his hand upon the great man's knocker. But their courage failed them, and the young admirers of literary genius returned home without venturing to ask for an interview. Dr. Johnson died in 1785.

In 1786 Mr. Rogers printed his first volume of poetry, entitled 'An Ode to Superstition, with some other Poems.' The other poems were—'To a Lady on the Death of her Lover,' 'The Sailor,' 'A Sketch of the Alps at Daybreak,' and 'A Wish.' In the Ode the powers and evils of Superstition are pointed out calmly and philosophically. The examples are all drawn from distant lands or bygone times. The Poet only hints at the intolerance of his own day, when he adds at the close his hope for the future, and his belief that Reason will at last triumph over the rack and wheel of her old enemy :

'Canst thou, with all thy terrors crowned,
'Hope to obscure that latent spark,
'Destined to shine when suns are dark?'

Truth will at last give us the blessings of piety and peace :

‘ Her touch unlocks the day-spring from above,
‘ And lo ! it visits man with gleams of light and love.’

He had written other verses before these, but he did not think them good enough to be made public. This small volume he published without his name, from a natural doubt whether it would be favourably received. The longer Poem, the Ode, would be put in comparison with those of Collins and Gray. But his fears were groundless. His poems were at once noticed with praise in the *Monthly Review* ; he had no further anxiety about their fate, and he owned himself the author among his literary friends. The Critic begins : ‘ In these pieces we perceive the hand ‘ of an able master ;’ and adds : ‘ He has exhibited ‘ the striking historical facts with the fire and energy ‘ proper to Lyric poetry ;’ and ‘ The rest of the pieces ‘ have the same character of chaste and classical ‘ elegance.’ Such praise was most encouraging and most useful to a young author in his twenty-third year. He did not know who wrote the *Review*, nor was he known to the writer. But he afterwards learnt that it was Dr. Enfield who had held out the helping hand to his little volume ; and fifty years later he had the pleasure of hearing from Mrs. Kinder, Dr. Enfield’s daughter, the manner in which the admiring critic read the Ode to his family.

In 1788 his brother Thomas died. Thomas was eighteen months older than himself. They were daily companions both at home and in the banking-house, here they were in partnership with Mr. Welch and

their father, and they dined every day together at the table of Mr. Olding, who lived over the business. Their elder brother, Daniel, had left home for Cambridge and Lincoln's Inn; their younger brother, Henry, was a boy at school. Hence the death of Thomas made a great change in the daily life of Samuel, the survivor, and he became the friend and adviser upon whom the father relied for help in all matters of business. He thus speaks of Thomas's death, and describes his character in the 'Pleasures of Memory:'

'Oh thou! with whom my heart was wont to share
'From reason's dawn each pleasure and each care;
'With whom, alas! I fondly hoped to know
'The humble walks of happiness below;
'If thy blessed nature now unites above
'An angel's pity with a brother's love,
'Still o'er my life preserve thy mild controul,
'Correct my views, and elevate my soul;
'Grant me thy peace and purity of mind,
'Devout yet cheerful, active yet resigned;
'Grant me like thee, whose heart knew no disguise,
'Whose blameless wishes never aimed to rise,
'To meet the changes Time and Chance present,
'With modest dignity and calm content.
'When thy last breath, ere Nature sunk to rest,
'Thy meek submission to thy God expressed;
'When thy last look, ere thought and feeling fled,
'A mingled gleam of hope and triumph shed;
'What to thy soul its glad assurance gave,
'Its hope in death, its triumph o'er the grave?
'The sweet Remembrance of unblemished youth,
'The still inspiring voice of Innocence and Truth!'

The publication of his little volume of poems, the favourable way in which it was received in the world,

and his marked literary ambition, gained him respect with his family, and made him important in his father's eyes. He seized every opportunity of becoming acquainted with men of letters; and in this wish his father was glad to help him. His literary friends at this time were chiefly among the Presbyterians; such as his next-door neighbour, Dr. Price, whose simple prose style gained his early admiration, and Dr. Towers, who succeeded Dr. Price as preacher on the Green, whose conversation was always on literature. With Mrs. Barbauld, who was then living at Hampstead, he became acquainted by sending her a copy of his *Ode to Superstition*. The establishment of the Dissenting College at Hackney, of which Mr. Thomas Rogers was chairman, brought Dr. Kippis, who was one of the tutors there, as a visitor to the Green. But Edinburgh was now the chief seat, if not of literature, at least of literary society; society in London was too much engaged in politics; and in 1789 he made a visit to Scotland. He travelled on horseback, with a boy behind him on a second horse. At Edinburgh, by the help of letters from Dr. Kippis, he became acquainted with Dr. Robertson, the historian; with Mr. Mackenzie, the author of *The Man of Feeling*; and with Mr. Adam Smith, the author of *The Wealth of Nations*. He met in company Dr. Black, the chemist, and Playfair, the mathematician. He heard Dr. Blair and Dr. Robertson preach. At Edinburgh also he made acquaintance with Dr. Johnson's friend, Mrs. Piozzi, who was there with her husband and younger

daughters. But in after years, when looking back upon this visit to Scotland, Mr. Rogers hardly thought with more pleasure of seeing these men of literary eminence, than with regret that there was one whom he did not see. Robert Burns had already published the best of his poems ; but so little were they then thought of, that our traveller, though asking advice from his Edinburgh friends as to his future route, was never told to call upon the author of the *Cotter's Saturday Night*. Burns was driven by his follies and by neglect to become an officer in the Excise in the very year that Mr. Rogers, with whom poetry was the uppermost thought in his mind, was asking to be introduced to the literary men of Scotland.

The political hopes and fears of the nation were at this time raised to the highest pitch by what was going forward in Paris. The French Revolution had begun : the many, rising against the tyranny of the government and the nobles, had broken their chains, but had not yet run into such excesses as to alarm the friends of liberty in England. The Bastille had been taken by the mob. The king had surrendered his unlimited power after the massacre of his Swiss guards at Versailles, and had been brought to Paris almost a prisoner. Hereditary titles had been abolished, and a new constitution had been proclaimed. The English Tories were frightened, lest the revolutionary spirit should spread to England ; while the friends of reform gained courage, and thought that it was then the time to get many abuses and corruptions removed

from our constitution. The Dissenters took the side of hope ; and Dr. Price, in his Discourse on the Love of our Country, congratulated his hearers on the prospect of an improvement in human affairs, when the dominion of kings and priests would give way to the dominion of laws and conscience. Burke, on the side of the king, had published his Reflections on the French Revolution, and Paine, on the side of the people, his Rights of Man. Mr. Rogers felt warmly with the Whigs and Dissenters; and in January, 1791, he made a short visit to Paris, led by his wish to witness a great nation's first steps in the path of freedom, after it had been enchained for so many generations. At Amiens he was not able to hear mass in the cathedral, as the chapels had been sealed up and were to remain so till the priests had taken the civic oath. The Church property had been seized by the State; and the priests were the object alike of hatred and of ridicule. He found that some of the French, to whom he had letters of introduction, were already alarmed at the excesses which threatened to follow upon the removal of the old restraints. But Mr. Rogers as yet saw more reason to hope than to fear. He was delighted, he wrote home, 'to observe so many thousands beating, as it were, with one pulse in the cause of liberty and their country, and crowding every public walk to speak openly those noble sentiments which before they hardly dared to think of.'

During this short visit, and in the midst of this

political excitement, he took only a hasty view of the Orleans Gallery of pictures, which a few years later were brought to England. He had not as yet had his attention much turned to works of art; though, indeed, only the month before he started for Paris he had heard Sir Joshua Reynolds deliver his last lecture in the Royal Academy, and heard Burke compliment him, when he sat down, with the words of Milton:

‘The angel ended, and in Adam’s ear
‘So charming left his voice, that he a while
‘Thought him still speaking, still stood fix’d to hear.’

In the beginning of the next year, 1792, Mr. Rogers published his ‘Pleasures of Memory.’ He had been busy upon this poem for six years. He wrote it while closely engaged in the banking-house during the day, and returning in the evening to the quiet circle of his father, his three sisters, and their mother’s cousin, Mrs. Mitchell, who lived with them as a mother. But he thought it safest not to put his name to it, and he described it as by the author of the ‘Ode to Superstition.’ It was at once most favourably received and universally admired. The Monthly Review, which was still the chief organ of literary praise and blame, praised it highly, saying, that ‘correctness of thought, delicacy of sentiment, ‘variety of imagery, and harmony of versification ‘are the characters which distinguish this beautiful ‘poem in a degree that cannot fail to ensure its ‘success.’ The poem indeed was at once most suc-

cessful, and has ever since continued popular. No secret was made of who was the author. He was acknowledged to be a true poet, and he held his rank unquestioned when, in the next half century, men arose better than any that bore the name of poet when he began to publish. It was a favourable moment for a young candidate for public notice. Poetry was then at a very low ebb; Mason, Joseph Wharton, Wm. Whitehead, Cambridge, Beattie, Cowper, and Hayley, were the then living poets; Crabbe indeed had begun to write, but his poems had not yet made him known. Of these no one but Cowper could bear any comparison with the author of 'Pleasures of Memory.'

The sale of this new poem was most rapid. A second, third, and fourth edition, in various-sized volumes, were published before the end of the next year, 1793. To the principal poem in the volume were added two shorter poems, the beautiful lines 'On a Tear,' and 'An Italian Song.' He also added to this volume the 'Ode to Superstition,' and the other contents of the former volume; except indeed that he omitted the lines 'To a Lady on the Death of her Lover,' which he thought not good enough to be joined with his later and better works.

In 1793 his father died; and it was during the anxiety of his last illness that Mr. Rogers wrote the lines 'In a Sick Chamber,' beginning,

'There, in that bed so closely curtained round,
'Worn to a shade, and wan with slow decay,
'A father sleeps!'

After the death of his father Mr. Rogers took chambers in Paper Buildings, in the Temple, and tried what it was to have two homes. But he in part left the house at Newington Green to his younger brother Henry and his sisters, finding that two houses did not give the comfort of one, and remarking that

‘Who boasts of more (believe the serious strain)

‘Sighs for a home, and sighs, alas! in vain.’

He was then thirty years of age, and master of a large fortune; and by introducing his brother Henry two years afterwards into the banking-house to manage it for him, he soon became master also of ample leisure for literature and society. He continued in the same business till his death, sixty years later; but he always left the management of it to his several partners who one after the other joined him in the firm during that long period.

Of his brothers and sisters two had already, before the father's death, left Newington Green for homes of their own, and a third was soon to leave. Daniel settled with his family on his estate in Worcestershire. Martha also was married, and Maria was soon to marry. Sarah and Henry remained single, and as long as they both lived they dwelt together. They were all alive to the excellence of their brother's poetry, and able to encourage him in writing by showing that they valued it. Daniel, the country squire, was a man of delightfully simple mind, a great reader, and throughout life an earnest student of the ancient and Eastern languages. Sir

E. Brydges, in his Autobiography, speaks of him most highly. Henry also, the man of business, though less of a scholar than Daniel, and moving in a smaller circle of friends than the Poet, was the beloved and admired centre of that circle; and later in life he followed his brother in forming a choice collection of pictures. When the eldest of the three brothers died, in 1829, Charles Lamb mourned him in a sonnet beginning:

‘Rogers, of all the men whom I have known
‘But slightly, who have died, your brother’s loss
‘Touch’d me most sensibly.’

The marriage of his sister Maria, in 1795, was not without some influence on Mr. Rogers’s tastes. Sutton Sharpe, his new brother-in-law, though brought up to trade and always engaged in business, was particularly fond of the fine arts. He had when young drawn from the antique and from the life in the Royal Academy, and was intimate with Stothard, Flaxman, Shee, Opie, Fuseli, Bewick, Holloway, and other artists. To these artists and in a great measure to these tastes he introduced Mr. Rogers; and Mr. Rogers then ornamented his rooms with a number of casts and drawings from the best ancient statues, and with engravings from Raphael’s pictures in the Vatican. His love of art also now showed itself in his works; and the volume of his poems was ornamented with engravings after drawings by Westall and Stothard, to both of which artists his patronage was most kind and useful.

In 1795, having become acquainted with Mrs. Siddons, he wrote for her an Epilogue to be spoken on her benefit-night after a tragedy. It playfully describes the life of a fashionable lady, in the style of Shakspeare's Seven Ages of Man. Mrs. Siddons was much pleased with it, but took the liberty, when she spoke it, of curtailing it and a little altering it, as she said for stage effect.

A few years before this time he had become acquainted with Richard Sharp, to whom he was introduced by his friend William Maltby. Richard Sharp was a man of industry and ambition, fond of reading, of great memory and sound judgment, and a good critic. He had published an Essay on English Style, and was a valuable friend to a young author. In later life he became a wealthy West India merchant, and a Member of Parliament. His society was much courted, and he often went by the name of Conversation Sharp. While Samuel Rogers was living at Newington Green, his friend Conversation Sharp was mixing in literary and fashionable circles at the West End of London, and recommending him to follow in the same path. This circumstance gave rise to the 'Epistle to a Friend.' In the same spirit Horace had before addressed a poem to his city friend Fuscus, and Petrarch a sonnet to Colonna. His friend Dr. Aikin had also just translated the Epistle of Frascatorius to Turrianus, in praise of a country life for a man of letters. To this latter Mr. Rogers's 'Epistle' is

most allied. He published it in 1798. It is one of the most pleasing of his poems. In it he explains the principles of true taste, as being founded on simplicity, and as bringing about great ends by small means. It is a picture of his mind at the age of thirty-five, as the former poem, the 'Pleasures of Memory,' shows his mind at the age of twenty-nine. The 'Epistle to a Friend' describes his views of life, and his feelings on art, on literature, and on society, as one who valued cheap pleasures, who had lived out of town, and was separated thereby from London's round of gaiety and glitter. But it shows some change in his habits and tastes since he published the 'Pleasures of Memory.' In that earlier poem the Family Portraits are the only works of art spoken of:—

'Those once-loved forms, still breathing thro' their dust.'

They were almost the only works of art known in his father's house. In this later poem, on the other hand, we find that he had gained a knowledge and love of art of the highest class, and understood the beauties of Greek sculpture and Italian painting. But he cultivated art as yet only as a student and with economy. He had not begun to form his own valuable collection; and the works therein recommended to our purchase are not pictures and marbles, but copies from the antique in plaster and sulphur, and engravings after the Italian painters. He had not then taken a house in St. James's

'Amid the buzz of crowds, the whirl of wheels,'

and ornamented with original pictures and costly ancient vases and marbles. But his tastes were changing in favour of a town life; and in the same year in which he published this 'Epistle,' with its apology for a literary life in the country, he sold the house at Newington Green, and for the future dwelt wholly in London and alone.

While his father lived, Mr. Rogers's friends had been as much chosen for their politics as for their literature. In the year 1792, when a society was formed for obtaining a reform in Parliament, under the name of the Friends of the People, Mr. Rogers and his father both belonged to it, together with his brother-in-law, Mr. John Towgood, and they signed the address to the nation which was then put forth by Charles Grey, James Mackintosh, Samuel Whitbread, Philip Francis, Thomas Erskine, R. B. Sheridan, and others, who all thought that the way to save our constitution was to reform its abuses, and that a violent revolution, like that in France, was more likely to be brought on than avoided by the obstinacy of the Tories. Among his political friends were Priestley, the theological writer and chemist; and Gilbert Wakefield, the classical scholar; and Horne Tooke, who wrote on language; and W. Stone, at whose house in Hackney he met Charles Fox; and Erskine, the barrister who defended Stone and Tooke on their trials for treason, and William Smith, the Dissenters' champion in Parliament. Dr. Priestley paid him a visit at Newington Green, when on his way to America, after his

house at Birmingham had been burnt down by the Tory mob. Horne Tooke's more violent politics did not frighten him; and he felt warmly for him when in 1794 he was carried prisoner to the Tower,

‘thro’ that gate misnamed, thro’ which before
‘Went Sidney, Russell, Raleigh, Cranmer, More,
‘Or into twilight within walls of stone,
‘Then to the place of trial.’

There Mr. Rogers was present as a spectator; and with every friend of liberty he rejoiced heartily at his acquittal.

He often visited Horne Tooke at his house at Wimbledon, where the old man, while digging in his garden, would talk about the peculiarities of language as described in his ‘Diversions of Purley,’ and about the political changes then hoped for and demanded by the reformers. Of all the able men whom Mr. Rogers had the good fortune to know, he thought Horne Tooke in conversation the most able. His wish he tells us in the following lines:—

‘When He, who best interprets to mankind
‘The “Winged Messengers” from mind to mind,
‘Leans on his spade, and, playful as profound,
‘His genius sheds its evening-sunshine round,
‘Be mine to listen.’

In return for the compliment of these verses Horne Tooke afterwards gave him his copy of Chaucer's Works in black letter, full of manuscript notes, and with an account of his being arrested and taken to the Tower written in the margin.

In 1796 Mr. Rogers was summoned before the

Privy Council, and afterwards as a witness in the Court of King's Bench, on the trial of Stone for treason, in consequence of a few words that passed between them in Cheapside. He was called against the prisoner, but his evidence told in his favour; for it was justly argued that Stone's doings or designs could not be very treasonable if he stopped the first friend he met in the street to talk about them.

Fox he often visited in the country, where he describes him

‘at St. Anne’s so soon of care beguiled,
 ‘Playful, sincere, and artless as a child !
 ‘How oft from grove to grove, from seat to seat,
 ‘With thee conversing in thy loved retreat,
 ‘I saw the sun go down ! Ah, then ’t was thine
 ‘Ne’er to forget some volume half divine,
 ‘Shakspeare’s or Dryden’s, thro’ the chequered shade }
 ‘Borne in thy hand behind thee as we strayed ;
 ‘And when we sate (and many a halt we made) }
 ‘To read there with a fervour all thy own,
 ‘And in thy grand and melancholy tone, }
 ‘Some splendid passage not to thee unknown, }
 ‘Fit theme for long discourse——’

With Grattan he became acquainted on a visit to Tonbridge Wells, where took place the walks with him under the trees on Bishop’s Down, that he has described in his poem :—

‘A walk in spring—Grattan, like those with thee
 ‘By the heath side (who had not envied me ?)
 ‘When the sweet limes, so full of bees in June,
 ‘Led us to meet beneath their boughs at noon ;
 ‘And thou didst say which of the Great and Wise,
 ‘Could they but hear and at thy bidding rise,
 ‘Thou wouldst call up and question.’

In his 'Epistle to a Friend' Mr. Rogers describes his feelings at this period of his life, the value which he set upon the society of men rich in knowledge and in the powers of conversation, and at the same time his own fixed purpose to gain a rank for himself and to make himself both worthy and thought worthy to associate with them,

'pleased, yet not elate,
'Ever too modest or too proud to rate
'Myself by my companions ; self-compelled
'To earn the station that in life I held.'

After an hour or two spent in the company of these able and distinguished men, Mr. Rogers on his return home often noted down in his journal those opinions and remarks which he had heard that were best worth remembering. In this way he left behind him a few pages, chosen out of many, of his conversations with Horne Tooke, Erskine, Fox, and Grattan, to which he afterwards added some others. In after-life he used often to read these notes aloud to his friends ; and they have since his death been published by my brother William.

His circle of acquaintance was much enlarged since he fixed his abode wholly in London. His society was eagerly sought for by ladies of fashion as well as by men of letters. His father when young and living in Worcestershire had mixed with the men of rank in his own neighbourhood. He had been intimate with the Earl of Stamford and Warrington, and that excellent man the first Lord Ivttelton,

the poet, and his son-in-law, Lord Valencia, the father of the traveller. But though such society had been cultivated by the grandfather at the Hill, it was by no means to the father's taste. On settling in Newington Green he was glad to drop his titled acquaintance; and he gave his son the strong advice, 'Never go near them, Sam.' But their doors were now open to the young and wealthy poet; and he did not refuse to enter. At Lady Jersey's parties he was a frequent visitor; and with his 'Epistle to a Friend,' in 1798, he published the lines addressed to her youngest daughter Harriet, on the coming marriage of an elder sister. At the same time were published the lines 'To a Friend on his Marriage,' those entitled 'A Farewell,' and those 'To a Gnat.' This last piece would seem to have been written in order that it might end in mock heroic style with Dryden's line,

'I wake in horror and dare sleep no more.'

As his health was still delicate he was advised by his friend Dr. Moore, the physician, and author of *Zeluco*, to spend the winter of 1799-1800 in Devonshire. On his journey either there or back, he paid a visit to Gilbert Wakefield, who was then a prisoner in Dorchester gaol for a political libel. He thereby indulged his kind feelings for a literary friend, and at the same time marked his disapproval of the harsh laws and of the Tory government which could so treat a learned man of spotless character, who was respected by all who knew him. While in Devon-

shire he took up his abode at Exmouth, and spent his time diligently in reading, chiefly English translations of the Greek authors. The extracts which appear in his note-book are striking passages from Thucydides, Herodotus, and Euripides. But he sadly missed the society which he had left at home, and he remarked that he fancied himself growing wiser every day, not by his own improvement, but from finding how little activity of mind there was around him. One valuable friend, however, he there made, namely, William Jackson of Exeter, the well-known musical composer and author, whose love of literature he admired, and by whose conversation he profited. Jackson on his death left Mr. Rogers his copies of *Paradise Lost* and the *Faërie Queen*, both the first editions of those poems.

He soon afterwards formed an acquaintance with Lord and Lady Holland, which grew into a warm friendship. In after years he passed much time at Holland House, Kensington, where Lady Holland was most successful in gathering together a brilliant circle of authors and wits, Whig statesmen and Edinburgh reviewers, aided as she was by her husband's manly good sense and warmth of heart. Mr. Rogers had a great regard for Lord Holland, in whom he found a kindred love of letters, of civil and religious liberty, and of his uncle Charles Fox; and when he addresses Fox in his poem, he ends,—

‘Thy bell has tolled !

‘But in thy place among us we behold

‘One who resembles thee.’

In 1802, on the Peace of Amiens, Mr. Rogers again visited Paris. Since he was there last time France had been closed against the English, first by the violence of the Revolution, and afterwards by the war. The king and queen whom he saw at mass had been beheaded, the nobility had been driven to emigrate, and Buonaparte was the military and popular sovereign, under the name of the First Consul. The galleries of the Louvre were at this time full of all the choicest pictures and statues of Europe. Italy, Spain, Germany, Holland, and Flanders, had been rifled by the French; and the finest works of art, the pride of these several countries, were now to be seen in the Louvre. Even before the newly appointed English ambassador had been received in Paris, the principal artists had rushed there to see this wonderful collection. Mr. Rogers soon followed them. There he found West, the president of the Academy, with his son, also Fuseli, Farington, Opie with Mrs. Opie, Flaxman, and Shee, as also Townley and Champenown the collectors, his brother-in-law Sutton Sharpe, and Millingen the antiquary, all warm admirers of painting and sculpture. He made acquaintance with many French artists—Denon, Gerard, and Masquerier, and with Canova the Italian. Masquerier got him a sight of Buonaparte on the stairs of the Tuileries. While surrounded by such company his thoughts were chiefly turned to the works of art. He stayed three months in Paris, remaining there after his English

friends had all returned home; and he spent the greater part of that time in the Louvre, where he cultivated his taste and formed his judgment upon the best models.

At Paris, and while engaged upon these studies, he wrote his lines addressed to the broken trunk of a statue of Hercules, called the Torso. They describe the feelings with which the student of art and history looked upon that grand statue, which ignorance had wilfully knocked to pieces and left a headless and limbless trunk, and which yet in that broken state the artists studied with wonder, while they acknowledged that it was the most breathing mass of stone, and the most glorious model they possessed; for the works of Phidias had not then been brought away from the Turkish dominions by Lord Elgin. These fourteen lines are the only approach to the sonnet that Mr. Rogers ever made.

In 1803 he made a second tour in Scotland in company with his sister Sarah, where they fell in with the poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott. This second tour he speaks of in the lines ‘Written in the Highlands,’ on a third visit in 1812; when, on again seeing the grey sundial in the kirkyard at Luss, he says:—

‘That dial so well known to me !
‘—Tho’ many a shadow it had shed,
‘Beloved Sister, since with thee
‘The legend on the stone was read.’

In the year 1800 Mr. Rogers, tired of the Temple,
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sold his chambers, and for two or three years lived in lodgings. He then, in 1803, removed to St. James's Place, Westminster, to a house which he built for himself, and where he dwelt till his death, fifty-three years afterwards. This house he fitted up with great attention to taste, by the help of the best artists. The large bow-windows looked upon the Green Park. The drawing-room mantelpiece was made by Flaxman, as were the ornaments around and upon the ceiling. A cabinet for small antiquities was designed by Stothard, and ornamented with paintings by his hand. The sideboard and a cabinet in the dining-room were carved by Chantrey, at that time a clever journeyman, and afterwards the celebrated sculptor. The furniture of the rooms was made very much upon the Greek model, and in part after the drawings in Hope's work on furniture. Round the staircase was added a frieze, taken from the Panathenaic procession among the Elgin marbles. He then began to form his valuable collection of pictures. He bought with great care and judgment, watching the sales as they arose, every year, for thirty years together, buying two or three of the best that were brought into the market. He added a large collection of painted Greek vases. All these works of art were so well chosen, that while placed as ornaments to a dwelling-house, they were at the same time the best models from which an artist might copy, and a student of art form his taste. His portfolios contained numerous drawings by the great masters, and engravings almost as rare and

highly prized as the drawings. In these rooms, with these beauties offered to the eye, and with these tastes in the host, it was Mr. Rogers's aim to gather around him, not only poets and artists, who were more particularly welcome, because their pursuits were those in which he was best able to give encouragement, and in which he took most pleasure, but all men of eminence, and all men aiming at eminence. He usually invited his friends to breakfast.

He had in 1796 received admission into the Royal Society, which he had asked for as an introduction to men of science; and in 1805 he offered himself as a candidate for admission into the Literary Club, which had been established fifty years before by Johnson and Reynolds, and which still contained many who had been fellow members with those eminent men. But here the Poet was black-balled when proposed, and he believed that he owed this slight chiefly to Mr. Malone, the editor of Shakspeare. At that time the anger of politics ran very high; the fever which followed upon the French Revolution was by no means cooled; and Mr. Rogers's Whig opinions were thought to be a very good reason for not admitting him into a club which consisted chiefly of Tories. His earnest attention, however, to literature and art had for some years very much turned his thoughts away from politics. He may have felt with the rest of the Whig party that all efforts were useless against the war-fever in the nation. Nine years before this he had voted for his friend Horne Tooke,

at the Westminster hustings ; and then for twenty-two years together, he never took the trouble to vote on a contested election till another friend, Sir Samuel Romilly, was proposed as member for Westminster in 1818.

In 1806 his sister Maria Sharpe died ; and in his ‘Human Life,’ he describes what all feel on such a loss in the following beautiful lines :—

‘Such grief was ours—it seems but yesterday—
‘When in thy prime, wishing so much to stay,
‘‘T was thine, Maria, thine without a sigh,
‘At midnight in a sister’s arms to die !
‘Oh thou wert lovely—lovely was thy frame,
‘And pure thy spirit as from heaven it came !
‘And when recalled to join the blest above,
‘Thou diedst a victim to exceeding love,
‘Nursing the young to health.’

The child here spoken of was my brother Henry.

In 1806 also, after the funeral of his friend Charles James Fox, he wrote the ‘Lines in Westminster Abbey,’ in full admiration of Fox as a Whig statesman, and as a man of letters. He admired his speeches in favour of peace when we were at war with France, and he admired his love of Homer and Virgil. Nor did he less like his taste in English poetry, and his love for Dryden’s versification. The Statesman had also valued the friendship of the Poet ; and when Mr. Rogers finished his house in St. James’s Place, Mr. Fox begged to be invited to the first dinner-party.

In 1809, when the Quarterly Review was set on

foot, Hopner the painter, who had been engaged to write a Review of Shée's Elements of Art, applied to Mr. Rogers to join him in the task, saying that he had the authority of the editor to ask him. But he declined doing so. He did not like the promoters of the Quarterly Review, and he did not like anonymous writing. He never wrote more than part of one Review, which was that of Cary's Dante, in the Edinburgh. He used to say that nobody could write a severe article against another, under the shelter of a mask, without becoming the worse man for it.

In 1812 Mr. Rogers published his 'Columbus,' not separately, but in the volume with his other poems. He had printed it two years before, in order to circulate it privately among his friends, and perhaps to invite criticism. Hence, unlike his former poems, which came out unlooked for and without a name, this had been much talked about, even by those who had not seen it. When published, it did not fulfil the expectations raised; and he always spoke of it as the least valued among his poems. It was the poem least valued by himself. It aimed at a style very different from his earlier works, which with correctness and delicacy of expression, were marked by accuracy almost minute, and by most careful versification. The 'Pleasures of Memory,' and the 'Epistle to a Friend,' are pictures of the Poet's mind, polished and refined in all its parts. 'Columbus,' on the other hand, with versification less regular, and with pauses which do not fall on the rhymes, aims at greater bold-

ness and at loftier thoughts of creative fancy. To these heights of grandeur it often successfully reaches ; but not always. It is an unfinished fragment, and does not please us equally throughout. It sometimes disappoints us, which is never the case with the earlier poems. The *Edinburgh Review* praised it cordially ; but the *Quarterly Review* praised it rather faintly, and saw much to blame in it, as an attempt to enter upon a style new to the author, and one in which he was not likely to succeed.

When the poem of 'Columbus' was being written, America was still the land of hope with the friends of civilization, while England had been frightened away from the very name of reform by the violence of the French Revolution. In England the self-appointed Few had not yet resigned their usurped sway in Parliament ; nor in America had the unenlightened Many yet claimed such an undue share of power. Mr. Rogers had seen Dr. Priestley and other friends set sail for America, to escape from the oppression of the ruling class at home ; and he speaks of it as a place of refuge for all who were oppressed in Europe :

'Assembling here all nations shall be blest ;
'The sad be comforted ; the weary rest ;
'Untouched shall drop the fetters from the slave.'

This last prophecy he did not see fulfilled ; but among the visitors to his house none received a more cordial welcome than the Americans.

In Europe, nothing was then heard of but the

glories and miseries of war. Napoleon had defeated the Austrians and Prussians, and had conquered Holland, Italy, and Spain. In Portugal our army, under Wellington, was struggling with masterly skill and courage, though with yet doubtful success against the French. At home we had been increasing our militia, illuminating our windows for supposed victories on the Continent, and filling St. Paul's cathedral with statues in honour of those who had been slain in battle, whether on the ocean or in Spain and Portugal. Such was the state of the nation's mind, when Mr. Rogers, true to his principles, wrote that fine opening to Canto VI.:

' War and the great in war let others sing,
 ' Havoc and spoil, and tears and triumphing ;
 ' The morning-march that flashes to the sun, }
 ' The feast of vultures when the day is done, }
 ' And the strange tale of many slain for one ! }
 ' I sing a man, amidst his sufferings here, }
 ' Who watched and served in humbleness and fear, }
 ' Gentle to others, to himself severe.'

It was only many years later, after peace was established, after, I believe, that he had become acquainted with the Duke of Wellington, that he added the Note to these lines beginning with the words, 'Not but that in the profession of arms there are, at all times, many noble natures.'

The poem of 'Columbus' begins with an introduction and ends with a postscript, both written in short lines, with rhymes returning irregularly; and this

year, on a third visit to the Highlands of Scotland, he wrote a short poem, which we have before quoted, which is also in lines of eight syllables, and with the same irregularity in the rhymes. He had lost his fondness for the regular couplet of the 'Pleasures of Memory,' and 'Epistle to a Friend,' in which the only irregularity allowed is an occasional triplet.

In 1814 he published 'Jacqueline,' in the same volume with Lord Byron's *Lara*. To these poems neither author added his name, though no secret was made of the authorship. *Jacqueline* is a playful little piece with exquisite versification. It describes a run-away marriage, together with the father's anger, and then his forgiveness. It is an apology for the disobedient daughter; and Mr. Rogers in his own family had seen with pain a father claim too great a control over his children's wishes in regard to marriage. Like the Introduction to '*Columbus*,' it is in lines of eight syllables with irregular rhymes, but with all the careful accuracy of the earlier poems. Mr. Murray the publisher paid to the authors the large sum of half-a-guinea a line for leave to print the first edition of *Lara* and *Jacqueline*, and instead of complaining of the bargain, had the generosity to own afterwards, that it had been very profitable to him. This was the only occasion on which Mr. Rogers did not take upon himself the charge of his own publications.

In the spring of this year, peace was made with France, on the retirement of the Emperor Napoleon

to the island of Elba and the return of the Bourbons. Upon this the Continent was again open to English travellers; and Mr. Rogers, in the course of the autumn, set out for Italy with his sister Sarah. He went by Paris and Switzerland. He crossed the Alps by the Pass of the Simplon. He visited Milan, Venice, Bologna, Florence, Rome, and Naples, where Murat was reigning as king. From Naples he turned homeward, and had reached Florence in the beginning of April, 1815, when news met him that Napoleon had escaped from Elba, and had returned to France, and that Europe was again plunged into war. He thereupon hurried home through the Tyrol and Germany, in the rear of the allied armies, which were then preparing for a great battle with the French. He passed through Brussels while it was occupied by Wellington's army, and through Ghent while it was the residence of Louis XVIII.; and he reached England six weeks before the battle of Waterloo.

While in Italy Mr. Rogers observed everything with the eye of a painter and a poet. He noted in his journal the picturesque appearances of the country, the climate, and the people; and he put on paper the thoughts which arise in a refined and educated mind on visiting spots ennobled by great deeds. This careful journal was in preparation for a future work; but it was laid aside for the present, as he had a poem already half written which was first to be attended to.

This poem he published in 1819. It was entitled 'Human Life,' and is full of generous sentiments and true wisdom. He therein teaches us to look upon our fellow-creatures with respect, and so pictures our trials and our enjoyments as to encourage us to aim after excellence, by showing us that it is within our reach. The character described is for the most part the English country gentleman of Whig politics, as a youth earnest after knowledge, when grown up a kind landowner, a just magistrate, a patriot who opposes tyranny in Parliament and in the field of battle; in short:

'Not man the sullen savage in his den,
'But man called forth in fellowship with men;
'Schooled and trained up to wisdom from his birth;
'God's noblest work—His image upon earth.'

By most readers this will probably be considered his best work; he considered it so himself. He was fifty-six years of age, and full of experience helped by reading and reflection. He does not task his imagination, as in 'Columbus;' but, like a thoughtful man, points out, as to those younger than himself, the good actions that they ought to imitate. The versification is free, and, like that of 'Columbus' and 'Jacqueline,' has not the regularity of his earlier poems; the pauses do not fall upon the rhymes, nor is the sense bounded by the couplet. Its scenery is wholly English; it had been begun before the journey to Italy, and it bears very few traces of thoughts gained in that classic country. Those thoughts, as

before remarked, were to be made use of in a poem by themselves.

Seven-and-twenty years had now passed since Mr. Rogers, on the publication of the 'Pleasures of Memory,' took his place among the English poets. Since that time all who had before him been successful in their efforts to gain the ear and favour of the public by poetry, had ceased from their labours and gone to rest. A new race of poets had arisen, with new tastes and new canons of criticism. Crabbe, Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Campbell, Moore, and Byron had taken their place beside him. He admired their genius, and welcomed them as friends, although they did not follow the lights which had guided him. A poet studies outward and inward nature to enrich his mind with thoughts; and he studies language that he may put those thoughts into the best words. Of this latter branch of the art the poets now took a new view. Crabbe and Campbell alone could be called of the old school of Pope, with whom shortness and neatness of expression was a marked aim. The others had rebelled, some against the regularity and careful finish which used to be required in verse, and some against the neatness and compactness of the sentences. Byron would have belonged to the old school, if he had followed his own judgment. As the readers were delighted with Childe Harold, he wrote accordingly; but for himself he valued most his Hints from Horace. 'We are all,' he writes in 1820, 'on a wrong

‘revolutionary system (or no system), from which ‘Rogers and Crabbe are alone free. It is all Horace, ‘then and Claudian now among us.’ Thus, whether for better or for worse, the poetical taste of the nation, both writers and readers, had undergone a change; and Mr. Rogers’s later poems, ‘Columbus’ and ‘Human Life,’ show that his taste had in part undergone the same change. He lived, indeed, to see a yet further change come over the public taste in poetry, when clearness and order in the thoughts were no longer required by the reader. But he strongly blamed all such cloudiness and want of ease in style; and he used to say of the writer who nowadays takes pains to make his style simple, and to set forth his thoughts in the order most plain to the reader’s understanding, that he is one of the most disinterested of men. So many readers now prefer obscurity, that an author is often less valued in proportion as he has taken care to make himself understood.

In the same volume with ‘Human Life,’ Mr. Rogers published the lines entitled ‘The Boy of Egremond,’ which are, perhaps, the least valuable of his poetry; and also the ‘Lines written at Pæstum.’ These latter were the first fruits of his journey to Italy, and are warm with the enthusiasm of a visit to the land of Horace and Virgil, of Dante and Petrarch, of Raphael and Michael Angelo. The solemn temples of Pæstum had been much in his mind before starting on his journey;

the copy of a Doric column from one of those buildings stood every day before his eyes in the corner of his room; hence he naturally greeted them as an old acquaintance:

‘From my youth upward have I longed to tread
‘This classic ground.—And am I here at last,—
‘Wandering at will through the long porticoes,
‘And catching, as through some majestic grove,
‘Now the blue ocean, and now, chaos-like,
‘Mountains and mountain-gulfs, and, half-way up,
‘Towns like the living rock from which they grew?’

These lines are almost the first that he wrote in blank verse; and they mark the continued change of his taste from the more careful structure of his early verses to a looser and freer style. They were the forerunners of his larger poem on Italy, which he was at that time employed upon.

Three years afterwards, in 1822, he published, in a small volume by itself, another portion of the thoughts gained on his journey, under the title of ‘Italy, a Poem; Part the First.’ To this volume he did not put his name, nor did he allow himself to be known as the author even by his friends. To make the concealment more certain, he had the secret kept from the bookseller, and took the trouble to be out of England at the time that it was published. Moreover, he leads the reader into Italy by the Great St. Bernard, while he himself had entered by the Simplon. The poem is in blank

verse, and the same in style as the 'Lines written at Pæstum.' This First Part stopped at Florence; the rest of the journey was to follow in Part the Second. It was not discovered who wrote it till he returned home and thought proper to own it. One of the reviewers thought it was the work of Southey. But had they remembered the 'Lines written at Pæstum,' they could have had no difficulty in recognizing the author of 'Italy;' though, certainly, it is very unlike any of the former poems by Mr. Rogers.

While the First Part of 'Italy' was being published at home, Mr. Rogers was on his route to visit the same country a second time, to examine with renewed pleasure spots that he had seen nine years before, and to see towns that he had before left unvisited. He again crossed the Alps by the Simplon pass, and went as far as Naples, and he returned home by Pisa, Genoa, Turin, and Paris. On this journey he fell in with Byron and Shelley, who were then living in Italy.

In 1828 he published the Second Part of 'Italy;' and by putting his name to it he acknowledged himself as the author of both parts. The sale of this poem was at first small. It was never reviewed by either of the two chief reviews. It addresses itself only to the few—to those who have travelled in Italy, and to those who by study are acquainted with its works of art and the deeds of its great men. It

describes not so much what he saw on his travels, as the feelings with which every man of education and refinement would wish to view a land ennobled by great actions, and familiar to us by classic recollections, and one to which ourselves owe so much of our civilization. Mr. Rogers fancied that the cool manner in which this poem was at first received amounted to an unfavourable verdict. He was not disposed to question the taste of the public in the case of a work which was meant to please the public. So he made a bonfire, as he described it, of the unsold copies, and set himself to the task of making it better. He at the same time engaged the services of several artists to ornament it with plates descriptive of the places mentioned.

In 1830 he published a large edition of 'Italy,' beautifully illustrated with engravings after drawings made for the purpose by Stothard, Turner, and others. In 1834 he published his earlier poems in another volume, illustrated in the same manner. Each of these volumes engaged his attention for two or three years, while he directed the artists, watched the progress of their designs, pointed out changes that he wished made, and then gave the same care to the engravers to see that they faithfully represented the original drawings. When finished, he was fully rewarded by the success of the work. The volumes equalled his expectations, and were acknowledged to be the two most beautiful ever published. Their sale was very large. He had spent about seven thousand

pounds upon the two; and the whole money returned to him in due time.

In the chapter entitled *The Bag of Gold*, he mentions dining with an old Italian prelate, the Archbishop of Tarento, who placed his cats beside him on the dinner-table; and the last addition which Mr. Rogers made to his collection of pictures was a portrait of one of these cats. When the Archbishop died, his pictures were sent to England to be sold, and Mr. Rogers, for old recollection's sake, gave a trifle for a portrait of the favourite cat.

We have already traced Mr. Rogers's change of taste from the regular couplet to freer versification and irregular rhymes, and then to blank verse; and now we note a final change in favour of prose. Several chapters in the '*Italy*' are written in prose, and they are by no means the least valuable in the volume. After this time he wrote very few lines of poetry. They may be summed up in a short piece addressed to Lord Grenville, '*on visiting Dropmore in 1831*;' another '*to Earl Grey, in 1834, on his Reform of Parliament*;' a third, in the same year, '*on the Emancipation of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies*;' a fourth '*on Strathfieldsaye Park*,' perhaps on visiting the Duke of Wellington there in 1838; and a few yet shorter pieces, which he named '*Reflections*.' Some of these last had been written for his '*Italy*,' but not used in that poem. The most valuable is that on the Child—now so pure—hereafter to be misled by his passions, and to know remorse—then to

discipline his mind and resist temptations ; whereby

‘ Fair as he is, he shall be fairer still ;

‘ For what was innocence will then be virtue.’

With these exceptions the few additions to his works were short essays in prose, added to the Notes at the end of his poems. These were written most carefully ; every word was weighed and re-weighed ; he bestowed as much time upon them as upon his verse, and thought them equally deserving of such care. The piece in which he thought himself most successful is the ten lines which describe the old friar’s remarks upon the picture of the Last Supper, in the dining-room of the convent. The old man compares the changing generations of monks with the unchanging figures painted on the wall, and says that he is ‘ sometimes inclined to think that we, not they, are the ‘ shadows.’ This anecdote was told to him by Wilkie, the artist, and it has been repeated in verse by Wordsworth and Monckton Milnes, and in prose by Southey. The North American Review, for July, 1842, compares together these four versions of the same story, and justly gives the palm to that by Mr. Rogers.

This turn to prose was not merely a change of practice from dislike to the labour of making verse ; it was accompanied with a change of opinion. He then praised blank verse over rhyme, and prose over both ; and he thought the sonnet the worst kind of verse, because it is most encumbered with rules. He once intended to add the following opinion on the

sonnet, as a note to the chapter on Bergamo, in 'Italy;' but he kept it back through fear that it should give pain to Mr. Wordsworth: 'Great as are the authorities for the sonnet, illustrious as are those who have devoted to it no small portion of their lives, I cannot but compare it to a dance in fetters, a dance of so many steps, nor more nor less, and to very monotonous music. The Procrustes who invented it is unknown.' He thought his 'Human Life' the best of his poems—the fruit of his ripened judgment and experience; compared with this, he would call his 'Pleasures of Memory' the work of a young man.

The two poets that he most read, and whose volumes he took with him on his journeys, were Milton and Gray. But like Dante, who studied from Virgil, and Reynolds, who studied from Michael Angelo, while he wished to profit by their inspiration, he certainly did not imitate them. He blamed their choice of words, as not being those used in every-day life. And if anybody takes the trouble to trace Mr. Rogers's reading among the older poets, and to note the passages which may have guided him in forming his own style, he will find more such in Dryden than elsewhere. Mr. Rogers thought that the feelings of the heart could be best uttered in the language of the nursery; and as an example of lofty thoughts made yet more striking because clothed in simple language, he would quote Mrs. Barbauld's lines beginning—

'Life, we've been long together.'

He compared the passage in which Gibbon describes his feelings on bringing his great historical work to a close, with that in which Cowper describes the same feelings when he had finished his translation of Homer; and he placed the simple narrative of the Poet above the more measured sentences of the Historian. 'The Poets,' he said, 'are the best prose writers.'

For his use of a word, when he had a doubt about it, he was chiefly guided by Dryden, Milton, and King James's Bible, and more particularly by the last. 'How fortunate for us,' he remarked, 'that the Bible was translated when the English language was in such a state of purity.' He made the same use of Cruden's Concordance as of Johnson's Dictionary. When an old and new word, or an old and new arrangement of words were before him for his choice, he chose the older if still in use. By so doing we check the too rapid change in the language.

He never spared his labour when composing. While writing the 'Epistle to a Friend,' he used from time to time to show it to Richard Sharp, who highly approved of it, and who would say, 'Let it alone, it can't be better.' But Mr. Rogers was not so easily satisfied, and continued to re-cast the thoughts, and to mend the rugged lines; and when he again showed it to his critic, Sharp would say, with yet warmer praise, 'It is quite another thing.'

He spoke of himself as an author with the boast of true humility, 'I always did my best.' 'What is

‘written with ease,’ he would say, ‘is often read with difficulty. Moreover, what is written in a short time, will live only for a short time. If you neglect time, time will be revenged upon you.’ He used to read with approval Ben Johnson’s remarks upon Shakspeare, and his wish that the great dramatist had taken more pains. He thought that even this greatest of our writers would sometimes have done better if he had corrected his first thoughts. And he warned his friends not to trust to correcting their works in a second edition, saying that an author has no rival so much to be feared as the old edition of his own book.

He took great pleasure in the circulation of his poems, and owned that he was not too proud to help the sale by the lowness of the price, and by the beauty of the illustrations. He gave away copies of them most freely to those who came to visit him. When they were once pirated in a cheap edition and sold for sixpence, he was rather pleased than otherwise, saying that he thereby gained the more readers; and instead of stopping the piracy he himself bought many of the pirated copies to give away. The number of editions which he printed was very large. His poems were also printed in France and in America, and translations of them in Italy and Germany.

Though many of the poets of his generation had been successful in gaining admirers by immoral writing, by writing, some openly and some covertly, in behalf of vice rather than virtue, he never, in a

single line or word made such an unworthy use of his powers, or so aimed at gaining popularity. He classed himself among those who

‘Scorned the false lustre of licentious thought.’

He held no praise or admiration worth having if it was to be bought by using his gift of poetry for anything but good. He thought Gibbon the greatest of our English historians ; but said that he would not, if he could, accept the honour of being the author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, stained as that great work is with the blot of so many attacks upon religion and morality. Nor would he bend to the taste of the Public in smaller matters. He felt that his making so much use of history rather than of outward nature lessened his popularity, and he saw that those poets were more read who required less knowledge in their readers ; yet he would make no change in his plan ; he wished to raise his readers to himself, not to lower himself to them.

His own volumes were always in his hands ; and he found a never-failing source of pleasure in the attempt to make his poems better ; a pleasure which is unknown to those who think that the first thoughts written down on the spur of the moment, are better than those which have been clothed with words more carefully. Wordsworth one day remarked to him that Southey, as he got old, had very much left off reading, and that he probably read his own works more than any others. ‘Why, it is very natural that

‘he should do so,’ said Mr. Rogers; ‘I read my works oftener than any others, and I dare say that you do the same.’ ‘Yes, that he does,’ said Mrs. Wordsworth; ‘you know you do, William.’

When Mr. Wordsworth died, in 1850, Mr. Rogers, at the age of eighty-seven, remained the last survivor of that bright cluster of poets that had ornamented the first half of this century. He had lived in friendship with most of them—Crabbe, Scott, Coleridge, Southey, Campbell, Byron, Moore, and Wordsworth. And he now mourned the last of them. Upon this Prince Albert wrote to him by the Queen’s command to offer him the post of Poet Laureate. But he refused it, making his age his excuse, saying that he was only the shadow of his former self. A second reason which also moved him to refuse it, he did not think proper to give; namely, that an honour accompanied by a salary was a very doubtful honour to a man in independent circumstances; and that as he had no need of the money, he did not wish for the character of withholding the one hundred pounds a year from some poet to whom it might be more useful. Prince Albert had before offered him an honorary degree in the University of Cambridge; but this he had also refused. He held, however, three unpaid and untitled offices under the Crown, given to him because of his knowledge of works of Art; he was one of the trustees of the National Gallery, one of the Commissioners for the encouragement of the Fine Arts in building the new Houses of Parliament,

and one of the Commissioners for inquiring into the management of the British Museum.

During these years, for almost half a century, from when he built his house in St. James's Place till the day that he met with an accident and broke his leg, Mr. Rogers's rooms formed one of the centres of literary society. They were hung around with a collection of pictures which received the approval of all the best judges. Almost every author and artist, on coming before the world, was there invited by him and welcomed as a friend. Perhaps no man not in some public profession, not in a political office, not in Parliament, was ever so much before the eyes of the public. His circle of acquaintance was boundless. Scarcely a biography of author or artist has been published during the latter end of his life, without frequent mention of Mr. Rogers; few foreigners have written their travels in England without describing his house, his pictures, and his conversation. A list of his social gatherings would contain the names of most of the eminent men of his day; but the only list that he himself kept was of the half dozen occasions when he had been successful in healing quarrels, when friends who had parted in anger had again met and shaken hands with one another in his house.

He welcomed to St. James's Place those who had achieved eminence by their talents, hardly more than those who were endeavouring to achieve eminence. It was his delight to hold forth the helping hand to merit. Many a young man, striving in the path of

letters or art, feeling as yet unable to make his works known, has breakfasted with Mr. Rogers, and been by him introduced to men of eminence in the same path, whom he had perhaps heard of or read of, and has walked home after breakfast an altered man, with stronger resolves to take pains, with renewed trust in his own powers, and encouraged with the thought that he was no longer quite unknown. In this way, while cultivating his own tastes, he enjoyed the pleasure of being useful and of guiding the tastes of others; and at the same time the pleasure of the celebrity which he gained therefrom.

Moreover, authors and artists are sometimes in want of money, and so also are those who are aiming at becoming authors and artists. In such cases they found Mr. Rogers a kind friend, ready not only with his advice but with his purse. The same generous feelings led him also to find a place in his poems, or in the notes at the end, to mention with honour each of those poets and friends whom he might feel his equals, and whom the world might think his rivals. Byron he speaks of both in 'Human Life' and in 'Italy.' Crabbe's power of describing he praises in 'Italy.' Moore he calls 'a poet of such singular felicity as to give a lustre to all he touches.' Of Wordsworth he quotes 'a noble sonnet.' Of Scott he gives us some lines not elsewhere published. He quotes Dante from his friend Cary's Translation. Luttrell's little known but clever 'Letters to Julia' he speaks of as admirably written; and to his early friend Richard Sharp, who late in life published some

Epistles in Verse, he kindly gives the title of a poet. With the same wish to please he mentions Eastlake the painter, and Herschell the astronomer; he quotes Lord John Russell's definition of a proverb; and in the edition of his works which is ornamented with the designs of Stothard and Turner, he styles them two artists who would have done honour to any age or country.

In his later years he usually spent some weeks every autumn at Broadstairs, where he lived at the hotel with his old friend Mr. Maltby. He went down with his own horses, and slept at Rochester and Canterbury to break the journey. At Canterbury, he always went into the Cathedral to hear the service chanted. One year he was recognized by the clergyman in authority, who to show his respect to the poet sent a verger to ask him which chant he would like to have performed. And this marked civility was repeated every year as he passed through that city. He was, of course, gratified by the attention; but his pleasure in the music was sadly lessened by it. It broke the charm to find that the clergymen were thinking of him, while he had been willing to fancy that they were at their devotions. During his last few years he spent the three winter months at Brighton, in the same house with his sister Sarah, who died only a year before himself. She had followed him in his love for literature and art, and had inherited a valuable collection of pictures from her brother Henry.

My uncle's conversation could hardly be called brilliant. He seldom aimed at wit, though he enjoyed it in others. He often told anecdotes of his early recollections and of the distinguished persons with whom he had been acquainted. These he told with great neatness and fitness in the choice of words, as may be understood by an examination of the prose notes to his poems. But the valuable part of his conversation was his good sense joined with knowledge of literature and art, and yet more particularly his constant aim at improvement, and the care that he took to lead his friends to what was worth talking about. I never left his company without feeling my zeal for knowledge strengthened, my wish to read quickened, and a fresh determination to take pains and do my best in everything that I was about. He trained his mind to look for the beautiful and the good in all that came before him. His mixing in the higher circles of fashionable life did not lower his taste for simplicity and true greatness. He had endeavoured to acquire the 'habit of looking everywhere for excellencies and 'not for faults, whether in art or nature, whether in 'a picture, a poem, or a character.' He describes himself as having

- 'A passionate love for music, sculpture, painting,
- 'For poetry, the language of the gods,
- 'For all things here, or grand or beautiful,
- 'A setting sun, a lake among the mountains,
- 'The light of an ingenuous countenance,
- 'And what transcends them all, a noble action.'

In his old age, as is usual, he returned to the recollections of his youth. He talked much of Mrs. Barbauld, of Dr. Price who had lived next door to his father at Newington Green, and of Dr. Enfield's review of his first poem. He then very much cultivated the society of the younger members of his family, and his conversation was never better than when he was speaking to children. They listened with equal delight and improvement. His words were as winning as they were wise—

‘ Praising each highly, from a wish to raise
‘ Their merits to the level of his praise.’

He then regretted that he had not married and taken upon himself the duties of a husband and a father. He would quote Goldsmith's description of the Vicar of Wakefield, who united in himself the three greatest characters in the world; he was a priest, a husbandman, and the father of a family. My uncle wished that to his character of a man of letters and a man of business, he could himself have added that he had educated a family of children. The very last addition to his poems were the lines advising young men to marry, beginning—

‘ Hence to the Altar.’

In early life he had been of a weak constitution, which showed itself in a pale and sickly countenance—

‘ From his cheek, ere yet the down was there,
‘ Health fled.’

This made him more than usually careful in his manner of living; and he grew stronger as he grew older. He was zealous in practising, as in praising, the use of the flesh-brush, which he called the art of living for ever. He was active in his habits; and when advanced in years was still a great walker. He was not easily tired. He had no sofa or arm-chair in that room of his house in which he for the most part lived, and he never made use of either till he broke his leg at the age of eighty-six. When that misfortune befell him, nothing could be better than the manner in which he bore it. He was henceforth, for what remained of life, to be confined to the bed or chair. But he never murmured, and he spoke of his accident with regret only for the trouble that he gave to others. He often made use of the words of Galileo; 'If it has pleased God that I should be lame, ought not I to be pleased?' He died at his house No. 22, St. James's Place, on the 18th of December, 1855, full of years and honour. His memory had latterly rather failed him; but it was only during the last eighteen months, when he was more than ninety years of age, that life began to be a burden to him, and the visits of his friends troublesome. Till then he had lived alone; but when his health failed, a niece devoted herself to him, to supply that watchful care which his sinking powers required, but were unable to ask for. He was buried agreeably to his own wish in Hornsey

churchyard, in the same grave with his unmarried brother and sister.

After his death his valuable works of art, pictures, drawings, engravings, vases, sculpture, coins, and books, were sold by auction, at a sale which lasted twenty-two days, and produced a large sum, making the property that he left behind him, about what he used to wish it to be, not much more nor less than what he inherited. But the proportions into which it was divided were very remarkable; the house and its contents produced a sum equal to three times that portion of his property which had brought him an income.

In religion and politics, Mr. Rogers ended life with nearly the same opinions that he began with; opinions which in his youth were frowned upon by the worldly and the timid, and which shut out their owners from many social advantages, but were less unpopular in his later life. When a young man he had followed Charles Grey in signing an address to the nation, in favour of a Reform in Parliament; and when an old man he congratulated the same statesman, in a copy of verses, on his services to the cause of liberty, when that great measure became law. When young he had given his help to Allen and Fox, the benevolent Quakers, in establishing the Borough Road School, for the education of the poor of every sect; and in after life he joined in the establishment of London University College, for the education of those whose

fathers thought the oaths at Oxford and Cambridge a snare to their sons' consciences on entering those Universities. He had been brought up as a hearer of the Arian Dr. Price, and a friend of the Unitarian Dr. Priestley; and in 1844, when the Unitarians were in danger of being turned out of their places of worship by the orthodox Dissenters, he signed the petition in favour of the Dissenters' Chapel Bill, as a trustee to the old Meeting House on Newington Green. He continued through life unshaken in his disapproval of requiring a belief in fixed creeds and articles of religion, and in his disbelief of the orthodox doctrines of the Atonement and Trinity; though, after the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, he did not refuse to take the Sacrament from clergymen of the Church of England.

These unfashionable opinions Mr. Rogers took no pains to conceal. He did not thrust them forward; but an anecdote or two will show that they were generally known to his wider circle of friends. Once when walking in York Minster with Mr. Wordsworth, and praising the religious solemnity of the building, Mr. Wordsworth would not allow that Mr. Rogers could possibly admire it equally with himself, because of his Presbyterian education. When walking along George Street, Hanover Square, with his witty friend Mr. Luttrell, he complained, as many had done before, of the inconvenience of being thrust off the pavement by the projecting steps of St. George's Church;

‘That,’ said Mr. Luttrell, ‘is one of your dissenting ‘prejudices.’ When the petition in favour of the Dissenters’ Chapel Bill from the descendants of Philip Henry, the ejected clergyman, was taken to Mr. Macaulay to be presented to the House of Commons, Mr. Macaulay asked: ‘Has my friend Rogers signed it?’ And when dining with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and sitting next to the son of an old school-fellow, then a County Member and a Churchman, Mr. Rogers startled him with the remark, ‘You and I are probably ‘the only Dissenters here.’

Every poet, indeed every author who writes on human nature and the feelings and doings of his fellow-creatures, leaves his heart and character laid open before the reader; and thus in Mr. Rogers’s poems we find—

‘His mind unfolded in his page.’

In the Preface to the ‘Pleasures of Memory,’ he tells us that his aim was to—

‘Enlighten climes, and mould a future age—
 ‘Dispense the treasures of exalted thought,
 ‘To virtue wake the pulses of the heart,
 ‘And bid the tear of emulation start;

and that he should rest satisfied if his lines—

‘Revive but once a generous wish suppress,
 ‘Chase but a sigh, or charm a care to rest;
 ‘In one good deed a fleeting hour employ,
 ‘Or flush one faded cheek with honest joy.’

Such was his aim at the age of thirty when he wrote these lines ; and every reader of his poems will at once grant, that when he laid down his pen at the age of ninety, he might justly feel satisfied, that he had used the gift of Poetry throughout his long life in the honest endeavour ‘to make the world the ‘happier and better for his having lived in it.’

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